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A large, faint, red-toned illustration of a flowering branch, possibly a rose, with several leaves and buds, extending across the cover from the top left towards the bottom right.

A SONG OF AUTUMN

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

HENRY
MEADE
BLAND

Mr. Benjamin Ide Wheeler,
With the Compliments
of Henry Meade Bland.
San Jose, Cal.,
Dec. 28, 1907.

I think this volume of poems by a
California author deserves a place
in the University Library.

Benj. I. Wheeler.

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...A...

Song of Autumn

...AND...

OTHER POEMS



... BY...

HENRY MEADE BLAND

Published by The Pacific Short Story Club
San Jose, Calif.

Press of Popp & Hogan, San Jose, Cal.



Esq. Pres. Wheeler

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by
HENRY MEADE BLAND.

*This volume is dedicated to my father,
Henry James Bland.*

162872

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H. M. B.

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INTRODUCTION

TJUDGE the advent of a new poet of greater value to the world than the birth of a king. Kings may, or may not, be helpful to their fellows; no poet ever fails to be helpful. To rule a people by kingly station is not a great achievement; to rule a people by kingly thought is a divine privilege.

Henry Meade Bland is a poet; how important a poet we do not yet know, but he is important enough already to justify his friends in large hopes and prophecies for his future. He is essentially one of the *vulgus*—the common people; from whom came Carlyle, Browning, Savonarola, Cromwell, Luther, Wyclif, Gladstone, Lincoln, Tennyson, Longfellow, Whittier, and all the other real poets and workers for humanity. His father was a Methodist itinerant, from whom he gained a sturdy heritage of physical prowess, simple truth, homely dignity, and sterling character, as well as a practi-

cal familiarity with the Hebrew scriptures. Family prayer twice a day in the old-fashioned Methodist style, when the Bible was read with solemn earnestness and the power of simple inspiration by a man to whom every word had its place, made an impression on the lad that will never be effaced.

He was born in Suisun, Solano County, California, April 21, 1863, and his early childhood was spent on the banks of the Sacramento river, redolent of romance of the days of '49,—the days of old, the days of gold.

When the father's itinerancy compelled a change, in order to provide a more stable home life for his family, he established them on a farm at the foot of the Marysville Buttes in Sutter County. Being allowed a large freedom, Henry Meade spent much time in wandering over the hills and in hunting ducks and geese in the Sutter Tules. Quite often his father took the growing lad with him on his circuit rides of sixty, eighty, and even a hundred miles, thus introducing him to a larger field of nature and to a variety of the sturdy Christian people of the region.

He was also required to do his share of work on the farm. Horses, cows, ploughing, harrowing, and all the varied employments of a farm hand be-

came familiar to him, and this life, combined with occasional summer trips, camping out, and hunting in the Coast Range and the high Sierras, gave him a real and an idealistic outlook upon Nature that made a deep and lasting impression upon his plastic and poetic young soul. His was no life of flowery ease; he early learned the lesson of hard work, for, while his father was not harsh or thoughtless, he was a stern disciplinarian and believed thoroughly in the doctrine that hard work is a fine training school for a growing youth. He sweated while plowing the broad fields of summer fallow, and many a night went wearily to bed after a hard day's work in the harvest fields of the Sacramento Valley.

The itinerant life of his father gave him also a variety of school education. He attended in turn the public schools of San Luis Obispo, Red Bluff, Indian Springs, Jackson, and various schools in Sutter County. At nineteen years of age he entered the University of the Pacific, and to earn his tuition taught in the Academy. One year he went away to teach school, as he needed to replenish his funds, but as soon as possible returned to his studies, and continued until graduation. Then he earnestly entered upon his life-work. He was ap-

pointed principal of the Los Gatos High School and remained here two years. It was while at Los Gatos that he realized a need of a small work on entomology. Being unable to find one he discovered the power of initiative so essential to the true poet, and went out into the fields, made a variety of entomological excursions, and soon thereafter published a small brochure under this title, which immediately bounded into the favor of teachers throughout the whole State. A second edition was called for, and he enlarged and revised it under the title "Studies in Entomology," but the entire edition was destroyed in the San Francisco fire of April, 1906.

After his two years at Los Gatos he returned to the University to complete his work for the doctorate, which he won on rigid examination in 1890. He now held five diplomas from his Alma Mater, three of them representing the Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctor's degrees. In fall of 1890 he was made principal of the Grant Grammar School, San Jose, continuing for six years, living a busy life of school work and studies. He had registered in 1891 as a graduate student at Stanford University, and pursued, on Saturdays and in vacation, studies in English Philology and in English Literature, under the

masterly mind of the eminent Ewald Flugel. He refers with deep feeling to the debt of gratitude he owes this profound scholar for the wonderful impulse his illuminated mind and great soul gave to the nobler side of his literary ambitions. Dr. Flugel, with Professor Melville B. Anderson, also of Stanford, who has taken a deep interest in his writings, and President Stratton, formerly of the University of the Pacific, he considers among his great teachers.

He took the Master's degree in English Philology with the pioneer class in 1895. In 1896 he became principal of the Santa Clara High School, which in two years under his management became accredited in all the points of the course at the University of California. A year was now spent in study at the University of California, and in 1898 he was called to teach English Literature in the State Normal School at San Jose. This position he has held to the present time.

In the meantime he has been busy in many lines of educational work. For twelve years he served on the Santa Clara County Board of Education. He is an active member of the California Teachers' Association, a member of the Council of Education, and a member of the State School Law Commission,

a committee of seventy to whom was committed the revision of State school laws.

During all these years he has been an active contributor of numerous articles to educational periodicals. He has written a series of "Literary Impressions" in various current magazines—Sunset, Craftsman, Overland Monthly—which have attracted wide attention.

In his work as professor of English Literature at the State Normal School at San Jose, he has shown the power of initiative before referred to. Realizing that something more than the mere announcement of classes in Literature was needed to attract and hold together the students, he originated the "Short Story Club." The writing of a short story is much the same as the writing of a "composition," but it *sounds* a very different proposition. More than that, it gives a definite aim to the composition. The ordinary school composition is supposed to be for the teacher only. It is the building up of a wall that the builder knows is soon to be torn down. But the short story has an end in view. It must really be a story. This demands invention of plot, care and skill in construction, thoughtfulness in character drawing, and laborious work in composition. The "Club" idea has worked like a

charm. It has attracted a large and enthusiastic number of students, and the members keep up the organization after they graduate from the Normal and go out to their life-work. There are branches of it at Stockton, Santa Rosa, and Fresno, and the name, therefore, has been enlarged to the Pacific Short Story Club, and Dr. Bland is its honored president. Several distinguished poets and men and women of literature have been entertained by the Club, and have accepted honorary membership, amongst others being Ina Coolbrith, Ella M. Sexton, William Butler Yeats, Jacob A. Riis, Joaquin Miller, Jack London, Herbert Bashford, Charles Warren Stoddard, and the writer of this sketch.

Dr. Bland is essentially a dreamer and an idealist and yet, as I have shown, there is a sturdy practical side to his life which his idealism converts into perennial charm. This is in no way better illustrated than in the fact that a few years ago he bought a piece of hillside, forty acres in extent, in the Mount Hamilton range of hills, some twelve miles east of San Jose, which affords glorious outlooks over the Santa Clara Valley to the Coast Range in the west, and of the Calaveras Valley and a beautiful range to the east. This delectable spot he has named Starland. It is a place for star-gazing and star

gazers. There are springs and a tiny stream, a pretense of a made lake, with clumps of live oak, white oak, sycamore, elderberry, laurel and bay. Flowers bespangle the hillsides throughout the year, and the place is made homelike by the presence of a small, unpretentious cabin built with the poet's own hands. Here Dr. Bland comes, alone and with his students and friends, alone to think and write, in company to read, to study, to enjoy Nature in her various moods. Several times I have had the pleasure of visiting Starland, the last time in the company of nearly forty Normal School students. How we laughed, and shouted, and ran, and climbed hills, and joked, and were real children again, and filled our lungs with pure air and our minds with exquisite pictures, and our souls with dreams! We sat on the hillsides, and one of us talked of the unrealness of the so-called practicalities and realities of life, and the realness of the ideal things, urged us to the living of the Radiant Life—radiant of physical health, mental health, and spiritual health. We sang songs of freedom and soul-uplift as we sat upon the topmost rocks of the highest ridges, and feasted on the valley far below and the mountains beyond and above. And over it all the perfect and peerless sky of California turquoise sug-

gested "the beyond" of the soul of which one of our number read to us from Robert Browning.

What a feast-day, and what a place to enjoy it. Only a poor man could afford such an ideal place; a rich man's pride would rebel at the crudeness and simplicity of it all. He would seek to "improve" it, but a poor man and a poet, thank God, is content with it as it is. And yet he has added to it. But the additions are only in the realm of love, sentiment and poetry. The chief spring that supplies the water for the house is "Mabel Spring," so named from his wife. Another and larger spring is "Mildred Spring," after his daughter, and a third is named after Morton, his son. Three school-friendships are remembered in Sherman Peak, Cecil Ridge, and Walt Hollow, these being named respectively after Sherman E. Harley, principal of the Black Diamond School, Contra Costa, Cecil W. Mark, principal of the Crocker school, San Francisco, and Walter C. Hall, of San Francisco. And there are points and peaks, salient features, groves and trees, named after poets and others of literary fame who are individual friends of Starland's poet host. There is Stoddard Point, keeping green the sweet and kindly remembrance of Charles Warren Stoddard; Bashford Grove, so

named from Herbert Bashford, the poet and rising dramatist; Wharton James Point, from the humble author of this imperfect sketch; Coolbrith Grove, from the famous poetess, friend of the poet; Normal Point, in honor of his guests from the Normal School; Cross Country Oaks, in honor of a visit of the Cross Country Club, and Coral Grove, for a friend of the family.

The memory of his sainted father has been enshrined by Dr. Bland in a headland of granite that bears the name "Grandfather's Cairn." "Annot Lyle Trail" is named for his mother. There are scores of live and white oaks named for visiting friends. Malthena Vale is for an Indian friend in Arizona, and May Ridge is for his sister.

All this is sentiment, of course, but of how sweet and precious a character. Who but a poet would have dreamed of it, and who but poetic and kindly souls could enjoy it? And many such are invited during the year to visit it. In the simplest and most unpretentious fashion, walking the few miles from the nearest railway station, sending on by team their provisions and, if necessary, their bedding, groups from two or three to fifty are alike welcomed to Starland. In the closest of communion with Nature in the benign aspects she here

wears, the souls of these visitors, many of them young students at the Normal, are in fit mood to be profoundly impressed by the poetic associations, the helpful sentiment, the upward suggestions of the place. At such a time the very atmosphere quivers with questionings as to the life and work of each man or woman who has been thus honored by his friend. Is not this education in the highest degree? To stimulate interest, to lead keen young minds to want to know, and then to give them full satisfaction as to those who have worked and are working in the practical realms of the ideal.

Starland is not only a joy to many to-day in the memories they have of it, but it is destined to become more so as the years go by. Thousands, in many and varied places, will feel the influences carried to them from this place by the young teachers whose plastic minds and souls have felt the impress of the upward impulses which Dr. Bland makes Starland abound in. So Starland becomes a preacher of life, of health, of righteousness, even as all that belongs to poets should be.

Of Starland, Dr. Bland's dear friend, Herbert Bashford, has thus beautifully written:

THE FREEDOM OF THE HEIGHTS.

TO HENRY MEADE BLAND.

We cast convention's chains aside
And, care-free, left the city mart
To seek upon the mountain side
The peace that fills the Primal Heart.

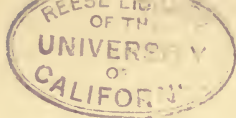
Oh, poet friend, I live once more
The rapture of that perfect day—
Again through God's wide-open door
We climb to youth's eternal May!

Again the quail pipes clear and strong,
Again those tender hints of tune—
The meadow lark's sweet threads of song
Thick-woven through the afternoon.

Of all that time the subtlest thing
Of each glad hour is with me still—
The poppy's golden offering,
The eagle's shadow on the hill.

The spicy fragrance where we came
To rest beneath the cypress trees,
That butterfly with wings of flame—
A lilting lyric in the breeze.

The songs that thrilled us as we climbed,
The sea winds touched with tropic spring,
The bird that trilled, the brook that rhymed,
The wayside crickets gossiping.



Introduction.

21

Beyond the rugged ridge we saw
The sun retire in robes of red,
And watched the weary warrior draw
Great amber curtains round his bed.

White moon slow lifting in the East!
Enchanting air and grassy crest!
Oh, wonder of thy bacchic feast,
Thou riotous, barbaric West!

All these were ours, while far away
Beyond dusk meadows sloping down
The lights of bloom-hung San Jose
Were gems that gleamed in twilight's gown.

Oh, joyous freedom of the height!
Oh, rest that no world-traffic mars
Beneath the ancient roof of night!
And near the universal stars!

The following pages, better than words of mine, will speak of Dr. Bland's poetic power. My work of joy in these few preliminary words has been to throw a few side-lights upon the *man* in order that his *poetry* may the better be understood.

GEORGE WHARTON JAMES.

Santa Clara College, November 21, 1907.

A Song of Autumn

'TIS old autumn, the musician,
Who, with pipe and tabor, weaves
The sweet music lovers sigh for
In the falling of the leaves.

I have heard his distant anthem
Go a-sighing through the trees
Like the far-off shouts of children,
Or the hum of swarming bees.

When he plays the leaflets flutter
On the boughs that hold them fast;
Or they scurry through the forest
Or they spin before the blast.

And they frolic and they gambol,
And they cling to autumn's gown
As the children to the Piper's
In the famous Hamelin Town.

Then they rustle and they hurry
To a canyon dark and deep;
And the Piper, dear old autumn,
Pipes till they are fast asleep.

To V. R.

A Remembrance

THY voice across the phantom years
Flows like a far-off silver stream,
I pause,—my eyelids fill with tears,
And living's but an idle dream.

The old-time simple ways of men
In which our boyish lines were cast—
O what is now compared with then,
The sweet, the unforgotten past?

The Pioneer

THIS is no pampered son of leisure-loving Ind,
No drunken scion of luxurious Mede of eld;
But in the heart and sinews of this knotted frame
The struggles of a thousand years are panoplied.

The End of Summer

SWEEP on, O tide, across the yellow sands,
And rock the birds, and flash the autumn moon!
No more the long unbroken summer dream,
The days are gone, too soon! too soon!

And thou, O wave, upon the distant crag
Splash till thy flood is turned to lightest down!
No more, at morn, thy rolling crest I'll ride;
The oar is lost, the rudder gone!

And thou, my most beloved, who changest not
Like foamy tide or briny summer wind;
This is the bourn I consecrate to thee,
The inland of contented mind!

A Mood

NAY, pillow not my angry brow,
Nor brace me in these downy plushes;
Your touch cannot restore me now,
Nor stay the hot blood in its rushes!

But give me air and room to rage,
And take your light thought back again;
For I have thrown a Titan's gage,
And toil alone can soothe my brain!

To a Photograph

REST there, old friend, beneath the oaktree shade;
Thy book forever in thy hand; thy brow,
Prone with the much-loved dream, shall never fade,
Thine eyes e'er tranced in musing, e'en as now.

The brook that bubbles at thy feet shall run
Till all the sands of time are in the sea.
The light that through the leaves from yonder sun
Flows to thy form can never go from thee.

And that wild gros-beak in the silent pine
Can utter not its wonted morning lay;
But, ready ever more to sing, shall be divine
And break to music in the after-day.

And thus 'tis mine to shut thee in my heart
Until, in time to be, some god-like power
Shall come to claim, and, calling us apart,
Shall give us this your dream, a sacred dower.

A Prayer

NAY, let me not weaken,
Hold my face to the blast,
Weld the armor upon me,
Let me fight to the last.

The Flight of the Limited

Ⓜ, THE dim pale faces whirling past
As I stand breast-high in the waving grain!
O, the mad wild rush, and the panting breath,
And the clashing bell of the streaming train!

A burst of steam, and an iron clang,
And the Titan drive-wheel's filmy spoke—
A rattle of rails, and a flash of fire—
And the vision's gone in a cloud of smoke!

How oft I stand as one entranced,
And list to the coming whistle's scream,
And long for the chariot rolling by
To bear me afar to the realms of dream!

Joy and Sorrow*

WHEN the joyous shout of singing clearest rings,
And the music and the rippling laughter flings
Its full melody in all its sweetness;

Then should come afar from out dear mem'ry's
springs

Troops of dim old sorrows; only then love brings
Happiness in all its rich completeness.

*Dante says that the greatest sorrow is to remember joy in time of sorrow. Likewise the greatest joy is to remember sorrow in time of joy.

The Forest-Call

I HEARD a whisper from Sequoian deeps
Call whence old leisure holds her silent sway,
And all the dreamy day it seemed to say:
“Come where the Angel Rest her bower keeps.”

I looked, and lo! her fire burned, a star;
And down into the ferny glade I came,
And stood before the flame, and called her name
And sweet her music sounded in mine ear.

The Hills of Long Ago

OUT of the hills of long ago
A strange, weird, solemn music steals,
And the vision it brings, the face it reveals,
Looks with a glance, that softens and heals,
Out of the hills of long ago.

Out of the hills of long ago:
Yea, with the smile of a summer day,
The voice and eye-gleam beckon alway,
Until as a child in fancy I stray
Far in the hills of long ago.

Out of the hills of long ago:
I would not bring her again if I could;
For the lily brow and the golden flood
Of curl, and the voice, would be gone, were
she wooed
Out of the hills of long ago.

On the Life-Trail

I ONLY keep a climbing.
I know the stars of God are overhead;
And, by that far-off streaming spirit-wand,
The meteor's gleam, I know that I am led,
And so I keep a-climbing.

I only keep a-climbing.
It may be yon blue range will be the last;
It may be many others loom beyond;
And yet I know the summit will be passed,
And so I keep a-climbing.

To a Wild Swan

WHITHER away, O magical seaman,
Into the deeps of blue and light!
Is it in search of thy star that thou wingest
Into the grey of mystical night?

Could I possess thy swift-swinging pinions,
I'd fly to the land of the heart's desire,
And away, in the realm of ease and nepenthe,
My soul should glow with such living fire

That mortals, who saw my ethereal winging,
Should deem that to faint constellation afar
A spirit had swung away in the skyland
And lighted anew a burnt-out star.

Autumn Reverie

THE sof willer-leabs am yaller, an' de wil'-goose
hangin' high,
An' de fleecy clouds am gadding' in de middle ob
de sky,
An' de ol' Souf-win' am blowin' fum de far-way
sunny Isles—
Dis de meller Autumn bringing' alternatin' tears
an' smiles.

Dar dat tu'ky am gob'lin' down de whisp'rin'
popla' lane,
An' de punkins in de medda, dat am gettin' ripe
again,
An' de oda ob de chickin' ling'rin' roun' de
kitchin' fiah—
Dey jes' mek one feel lak singin' in de great
celest'al quiah.

But de yaller-hammer pipin' in de oak-tree on de
hill,
Sumhow 'calls agin de pipin' of a voice fo'eber
still;
An' dat roosta-quail a-shoutin' in de eldaberry
row!
Ken dat be de same ol' bugle fum de day o' long
ago?

Ol' dog Tige he stiff and growly, an' he on'y wag
hi' tail

W'en he heah Miss Lisa bangin' on de chillun'
dinna-pail;

An' he sneak inta de kitchin' an' beneaf de stove
he sleep

Dreamin' fight wif wil' coyote w'en dey kum ta
ketch de sheep.

Seems dat win' he sigh mo' shrilly dan he do
w'en I war young;

An' de missus am so sollum w'en de san'-crane
song am sung,

Yet I feels dat somwhar, somehow, as I heah de
black-bird sing,

Out beyon' dis lon'ly Autumn will be eberlastin'
Spring.

Resurgam

SILENCE, O troubled heart!
This agony of time,
This surge and throe of earth,
This cry of death sublime,
Is but the Titan change,
The cosmic thrill sky-born,
The fire-sung omen of
A new creation-morn!



A Lover's Reverie

THEY tell me that sweet Anna Roseland,
In a country far over the sea,
That elegant rich-dowered maiden,
Is sighing—is dying for me.

Like the scent of the wild water-lily,
Or the odor of pine from the hill,
Comes the pulse of the old recollection,
The echo of times now long still.

I'm here in my Bengalese hammock,
A thousand miles over the sea,
With a dusky-eyed girlish Mahratta
A-serving Catawba to me;

And I dream of a pledge and a token,
A smile, and an aeon of bliss,
And the troth plighted under the poplar,
And sealed with a half-stolen kiss;

And a tear steals adown from the eye-lash,
And a flush of blood enters the brain,
As I think of an eve in the twilight,
Or poppies plucked down in the lane!

But why drink the dregs of a mem'ry,
When I know in a vale far away
That her soul and mine will awaken
And relive all the sweet yesterday?

Robert Browning

"The world still wants its poet-priest."—*Emerson.*

THE Sage of Concord pondered long and deep
The rhyme of poet and the wise man's dream,
In search of the one great mind that he might
deem

A master both of the love that angels keep,
And of the knowing that comes from the sweep
Of old philosophies; but not by stream
Of Avon, nor near the hoary Tiber's gleam,
Nor where Parnassus rolls its verdant steep,
Heard he the music. Had he Browning known,
His dream of poet-priest had been fulfilled;
For, ere our Browning reached his thirtieth year
Of musing on the abstract good, the clear
White flame of love entered his life, distilled
His soul, and truth and beauty were his own.

The Passion of the Poet

WRITE me a song," the poet cried;
And he gazed on a sail far away,
"Pray, what shall I write," I looked up and
sighed,
And a wave at my feet tossed its spray.

And its sweetness comes gently and often,
But the sorrow that reigns in this old surging
mind

No smooth-flowing sea-calm may soften."

And he said, "you shall write that the sea is kind

"Write me a song," the old poet sighed,

And wild and weird was the wave,

"O my master, pray, what shall it be now?"

I cried;

"See the reefs and the barriers rave!"

And he said, "you shall write, lest the waves
rob thy breath,

That the sea is wondrous unkind,

But that not all its rage or its moanings of
death

Can vie with a storm in the mind."

Reconciliation

WHERE lupines bloom and poppies blow
And poplars tower to the sky
And the long lines of new-sown wheat
Slope down to where the marsh lands lie;
'Tis there beneath the poplar shade,
Watched by a thousand lupine eyes,
Asleep and alone in a dim, dim night,
My own, my matchless Harold lies.
And when at eve the tide comes in,
And round and full-lit floats the moon,
And faint and far across the marsh
Is heard the sand-crane's sleepy croon;
'Tis then I seek the poplar shade,
And, while the eve-star swings its gleam,
I turn from sighing leaf and flower
To shudder at the plover's scream.
O cruel plover, cry no more
Like moaning tide or sullen wind;
For all unmeet it is to grieve
Except for those who fare behind.
But, stately flyers swinging by,
Clang all your mellowed sweetness forth;
For, while ye seek your chosen isles,
He goes to claim his Happy South!

Album Verses

WHAT are the cares of this world, Love?
When you with your book, and I with my song,
Can while away time in content, love,
And draw out our lives sweet and long?

Thanksgiving Prayer

'TIS not alone the grateful word we give,
 Spirit Divine, for sun, and flower, and rill,
And furry folk, and birds that live
 On leafy-mantled hill;

Nay, not for these, the eye we lift,
 And chant the song of praise in solemn part;
But for thy wondrous spirit-gift,
 The kindly human heart!

An Old Adobe

'TIS said that, in the happy golden day,
This was the sweet-sung castle of delight,
That 'neath these ancient oaken branches' sway
Dwelt the Castilian scion in his might.

They say the olive and the yellow wheat
Made plenty in these rolling sun-down lands,
That morning quail and evening dove whirred
sweet,
And meadow-brooklets ran in golden sands.

But now, the eagle and coyote guard
The broken banquet-hall of that old dream,
And naught of mirth and vintage-song is heard
Save what is hollow-echoed from the stream.

And where the Spanish maiden took her rest
The ivy clings and pale laburnum grows,
And he who sang and made the laughing jest
Has shut the door and gone where no one
knows.

On Monterey Bay

MY boat glides on upon a waveless summer sea,
And bears me charmed as one who thinks of
some sweet dream,
And stern old Ocean smiles and sends beneath
my helm
The fair frail tenants of the deep to convoy me.
O could I sail thus ever and forevermore
From beauty unto dreamy beauty till at last
Lost in the light of sunset sky my line I cast
Upon the golden sands that marge the unseen
shore.

The Death of Blanche

(A rendering from Chaucer.)

SO much of grief to me hath come,
That joy with me hath ne'er its home;
Now that I see my lady bright,
Whom I have loved with all my might,
Is from me gone and in the tomb.

Alas! O Death, what aileth thee,
That thou should'st not have taken me?
When that thou took'st my lady fair,
The truest, freest, freshest-souled,
Most beatific to behold,
A nymph was not more debonair.

Keats

EROS and Death had a quarrel one day;
The trouble between them began in this way:
The fair young Hyperion was seized in a breath
And marked by the ruinous fierce hand of Death.
Love saw the bard stricken and instant begun
A fight to recover her favorite son.

Thus Love fought with Death, all unaided alone
While Death vaunted loudly the youth was his
own.

At length after tumult that seemed all unending,
Agreement was reached of this tenure and tend-
ing

That on whomsoever the hand of Death bore,
Love should attend him and that evermore.

The Poet's Wish

I DO not care to mount so high
Upon the wings of song,
That critics wise, or classic sage
Will quote in volumes long.

I only care to troll or lilt,
Or chant a simple strain,
That aching heart or fainting soul
May be itself again.

A California Rain Song

THE winds are sweeping from Monterey,
And over the peaks of the blue Coast Range
The storm-clouds are tossing their milk-white
hair,
And singing of birth and of life and change.
And the lithe young farmer stands at his door,
And hears in that wild titanic tune
A promise of kine and rare white rose,
And the starry white of the blossoming prune.
And to her, his wife, at the window-sill
There never had come a vision more fair:
The low hills bathed in the sweet south wind,
And the storm-clouds tossing their milk-white
hair!

Cousin George's View

IT aint no good, as you climb the hill
To wish you're at the topmost round;
One well-made step is as fair to God
As though you leapt the peak at a bound.

A Farewell

IF in the flow of after years
Your heart should chance revert to me,
Let not your dear eyes fill with tears,
But smile or hum a melody,
And say: "He strove with all his might
Upon the task he had to do;
And, failing, took the next in sight;
Unfalt'ring, lived a long life through."

Foreboding

AH, sad, so infinitely sad,
Would be that tavern on the hill
Could it give back no mirth or song,
Its happy tenants mute and still.

Ina Coolbrith

NATURE took an evening dove's note
With a sigh of Shastan pine,
Robbed a streamlet of its murmur,
From a lark drew song divine.

These our good fair mother, Nature,
Wrought with ripples of a wave,
Wove with glintings from a sunbeam,
Hung with echoes from a cave.

Then she sought an orphan's cry,
With an errant night-wind's sigh,
With these touched her fair creation.
Then, to make reincarnation

Of the ancient Sapphic line,
From the far-off island-shrine
Brought the passion of a woman,
Gave the joy of being human.

The Divine in Nature

ON Shasta's brow the thunder sleeps;
But, with the lightning's burning rod
That burns o'er Lassen's piny steeps,
A voice comes from the mountain deeps:
"Be still and know that I am God!"

O'er Yuba's plain the Northwind raves,
And withers herb and blackens sod;
But, in the wild lake's roaring waves,
Is heard as from a thousand caves:
Be still and know that I am God!"

Caddie Kent

YOU call her name! My mind runs back
Into a realm of childhood dream.

The old south porch, and almond trees!
Tall sycamore beside a stream!

You call her name! A fair form moves
Beneath that ancient sycamore;
And light-blue eyes and yellow hair
Gleam in the misty nevermore.

Yea, strew your leaves, old sycamore
By murky tule lake and stream!
And, blue-bells, shroud in perfume dust
All that is left of the old dream;

For mind cannot forever hold
The sweet dim pictures of the past;
And heart would burst and brain would burn,
Could we not turn from them at last!

An Indian Phantasy

WANLERAN sat by his wigwam fire
Smoking a pipe of clay,
While near by on a white-wolf skin
The princess Ena lay.

Wanleran saw the smoke of his pipe
Curl through the evening air,
And the eddying rings were changed to a dream;
The vision was strange and fair.

There were rivers a-teem with golden trout,
And trailers of berries wild,
And the gros-beaks sang as in Paradise,
And he saw that Ena smiled.

For Ena was plucking the apples of gold
That perfumed the misty air,
For Wanleran caught as he looked afar
The black sun-flash of her hair.

And the smoke of his pipe still eddied and
curled;
More wonderful still grew his dream,
And light as the flight of a wren was the step
Of the maiden who moved by the stream.

But the dreamer saw a wild Amoree
Glide through the forest shade,
And he burned with a vengeful unmeasured
hate,

As the warrior stole near the maid.

His bow-string sung and a demon yell
Wanleran dreamed he gave—
When the vision of savage and forest and girl
Was gone like the mist on the wave.

But there beside him Eña reclined
On the wolf-fur's whitened gleam;
And Wanleran smiled when he knew his fight,
Had been but a troubled dream.

Balboa

❧ LET me climb like thee the Peak Divine,
Till gazing from the height serene
I make the mighty ocean mine;
Then, the far light and glory seen,
O let me wander to the shore
And, like thee, knight of golden dreams,
Wade in the mellow-rolling streams
And claim the sea of love forevermore.

Mt. Hamilton from San Jose

A BANK of green, a spire of pine,
A stately eucalyptus line,
The low grey hills in dreamy mist;
And far beyond the sky is kissed
By fair white tower gleaming high
Into the realm of cloud and sky.

To Joaquin Miller

① Singer, that Sierran hills
Have nursed in joy and sorrow long;
Whose soul hath drunk the hidden rills
That flow from fancy's sacred wells;
Whose voice from peak to peak hath swung,
And rhymed the secret sweets of song;
Sing, ere the evening bells are rung,
Sing, once again thy pines among,
Sing, in a measure swift and strong,
 The music of the olden days,
 The story of the golden days.

The Unanswerable

WHEN shall this passing show of love and death
and time

Fade to an end?

Shall each life move to each in endless chain

Until, in sweet, unmeasured days to be,

The joy divine shall triumph over pain;

Then on, for aye, upon an undreamed sea?

Or shall the God descend,

And, in a flood of golden molten stars,

Cleanse all at once the earthy passion-stain,

And, sweeping past Orion's far-swung bars,

On in His flashing sun-wheeled comet-train,

Whirl till He blend

Time, love, and death in one last, love-surgéd

Eden-prime?

The Be-All and End-All

AND this is what it all comes to:
To be in the game of life still;
While the brain pulses last, to play hard and fast,
And then go to rest with a will.

My Sunset City

MY city lies in the western hills,
And its moonlit towers, and palaces grand,
Its starry gates, and its silvery spires,
Stretch far away to the untraveled land.

And every day when the sun declines
Into the rose-empurpled west,
Wherever I am, I gaze and gaze,
Until as it were at the soul's behest,

A-gleam in all of its splendor and light,
My magical sunset city appears:
And often at night it steals away pain,
As again in my dreams my city uprears:

Then the heart how it lightens, the brain how
it burns,
And the deep of my soul how with joy overfills,
When in fancy transcendant I see the spires
Of my city that lies in the western hills!

Annie

① WOMAN with that raven hair,
All streaked and pied with silver-gray,
The smile that still with grace you wear
Shows that your heart is still of May.

And I would yet unlock the years
To play the happy chords anew;
But who can tune old heart-strings to
The music artless childhood hears?



Misunderstood

I SAILED away
In thought one day
Out where a mighty squadron lay;
But the sailors laughed,
And took my craft,
And broke my spar in play.

Out and afar
O'er storm-beat bar
That squadron sailed; but never a tar
From the stormy sea
Came back save he
Who clung to my broken spar.

To My Students

THOUGH you go and come like the tide
That runs on the rocky shore,
Though you loiter but for a moment
And vanish forevermore;
Yet the rocks of the grim old sea-coast
You mould, and you soften and whirl
Till, clear and white on the wave-line,
Lie the drifts of memory pearl.
And the broken cliffs of endeavor
You heal with the mild sea-cove;
And the gray bleak crags of the headland
You dash with the snow-surf of love.
And thus in and out forever
You sweep and eddy in glee
Till the rough old granite boulder
Is deep in the calm of the sea.

The Deserted Castle

AND is this all? The old dream-mansion planned,
And builded in our joys and tears—
Shall this, too, as the clay and sand,
Be but a shattered vision of the years?
And is this all? And was the temple planned?
To rust and crack and tumble in decay;
And shall the edifice we rear but stand
Awhile, and fall, and moulder as this clay?

To Charles Warren Stoddard

SOMETIME I shall stroll to your Afternoon Land
To rest me and muse and recall the old dreams,
And, when I am there, by the low-rhyming
streams,
I'll linger once more for the touch of your hand;
And then, when you too come again to the Isle,
We'll stray arm in arm down the sweet After-
while.

Pictures of Old California

To The Short Story Club

THIS moody, sighing, wind-of-Autumn strain,
This dewy mist upon life's window-pane,
Others may pass unscanned;

But you, good friends, who have the battle fought
with me,
And read the books, and loved, and sung, and
wrought with me,
You, you will understand.

Hills and Sea

SAINTE Francis Bay is calm and deep
And to the east the foot-hills sleep—
Hills that are wrapped in starry mist,
Which folds away when faintly kissed
By roseate red of morning sun;
And when the Shepherd's task is done,
And flocks lie sheltered 'neath the trees,
He turns to scan the bay and sees
The gleaming prow, the whitened sail,
And far away all gray and pale
The Mission towers looming high
Into the realm of cloud and sky.

The Rhyming Waters

IA Tara's rhyming waters flow,
Where bay-tree shadows come and go;
And often from its agate cup
The shepherd's snowy charges sup;
Then down o'er rocky height and bed
It bubbles on, by streamlets fed,
A river, silver on its way
To slumber in St. Francis Bay.

The Cabin on the Hill

HAR up La Tara's rocky stream
The shepherd's cabin windows gleam,
Where doves that murmur all day long
Vie with the evening cricket's song.
Over the dales and far away
Echoes a wild high-piping lay;
The Bard has felt the rhythmic fire
That waked Arcady's love-twanged lyre;
For since a wand'ring shepherd boy
The violin has been his joy.
Now, as he rides unto his door,
He chooses from his music-lore
A new-sung tribute to the shrine
Whose fires are to him divine.
All silent perched the chatt'ring jay
As throng the notes and die away.

Around the Fire

THE even-tide is now begun;
The home-folk seated every one
Beside the open buckeye fire,
Whose flames seem ever to aspire
At each sweep of the violin;
And cheeks and forehead pale and thin
Are flushed with streaks of sunset red
As visions of a day long sped
Are called again by swing and rhyme
From out the dark recess of time.
And now he stays the magic fling
His touch puts in the clanging string;
Then at the childish voice which says:
"O tell us of the olden days,"
Recounts with ever-glowing joy
Tales of the farm, or shepherd boy;
Then trolls a song as if entranced,
And in his eyes the fire-light danced.
As one from ancient poet sprung
He thus to simple music sung:

Song of the Olden Time

JUST want to hear the whistle
Of the quail that used to climb
In the hedge-rows of the homestead
In the olden Autumn time.

And I want to taste the bunches
Of the grapes that in their prime
Climbed the fence and lined the arbor
In the olden Autumn time.

And the honey was ambrosia,
And a touch of the sublime
Marked the singing of the vine-song
In the olden Autumn time.

I just want to hear the music
Of the ancient church-bell chime
That came floating in at even
In the olden Autumn time.

Like the odor of the blossom
Of the lemon or the lime
Were the kisses of the children
In the olden Autumn time.

And I see the distant faces
In a far-off pantomime,
Gleaming in the evening firelight
Of the olden Autumn time.

But not sighs or execrations,
Nor the swing of poet's rhyme,
Can bring back those days of glory—
Olden, golden Autumn time.

The Violin

SO fled the song—a rustic tune—
And all with sweetness interstrewn.
And left alone before the fire
The shepherd pictures many a spire
A-gleam among the yellow coals.
And then once more his mind unrolls.
O'er the long scroll he travels fast
Into the unforgotten past.
Straightway he lifts the violin,
And faint the low-drawn strains begin,
Three hundred years that instrument
Has to the heart its magic sent.
Full sixty years it has to him
Lent its soft tones and echoes dim,
It soothed him in his childish dreams,
And like wild wandering meteor-gleams
In youth it called him to the strife
That leads unto a well-spent life.
And now in age its strains can quite
Restore the splendor and the light
That shone three score of years ago
In a fair child-dawn's scarlet glow.
Old Cappe's workmanship divine

Had fashioned every piece and line
That gave it power to steal away
The secret joy of every lay.
From solemn chant to song he turned,
As in his soul the music burned;
Then played the rippling ditty through
That makes old laughter glide as new
Again, he struck the silv'ry whirl
That captivates the boy and girl
Who, eager, join the country dance;
And now, as one who hurls a lance,
He waked a strange forgotten tone
Recalling faces long since gone.
And then the figure loomed once more,
His partner of the days of yore.
He saw her wind-blown flaxen hair
And counted clear the dimples where
The rosy red and lily white
Blend like dawn with full daylight.
Then as time's streamlet spins and purls
He sees his chubby boys and girls,
And while he dreams the circle bright
Dances and gleams in ghostly light.
Alas! but one of all that line
Is left him now, and all the wine
Of other days is spilt and gone;

For this one too has reaped and sown,
And brought her brood unto the hills
To play among La Tara rills.
The partner of her woman's prime
Has passed beyond the realm of time.
So ran his dream, till on the shelf
The clock recalled him to himself.

Broken Bells

STRANGE fate it is that oft will give
The young to die, the old to live.
So happed it, by La Tara's wells,
'Twas like a clang of broken bells.
The daughter, youngest of his flock,
Answered the ancient Terror's knock
And left the grandsire old and gray
Her nest of fledglings. Day by day
He played the nurse and father till,
The baby sick'ning, 'gainst his will
He took all to the Mission where
Under the kindly Sisters' care
They grew. But he once more returned,
A hermit, and bereft, he mourned.
At length in wand'ring eastward far,
From morn to when the Evening Star
Hangs o'er the bay, comfort he found
Where precipice and chasm frowned;
And clamb'ring over the rugged height,
Friend of the eagle, and the white
Eternal silence of the peak,
Whose primal hoary robes bespeak
The full peace that, unseen, o'erfills,

And makes the glory of the hills.
In silence of the splendid night,
When smooth the clear untarnished white
Filled, like a sleeping sea, the vale,
O'er which a phantom ship might sail,
He seemed to hear a spirit-call,
Soft, like a distant waterfall;
But seemed it faint and far away,
A breath of the glad unseen, a ray
Shot from the happy outer-world;
And so his heavy pain was furled;
And thus, unburdened, from the light
Of snowy calm and starry night,
He painted all the mournful past
With color misty dim and vast,
And as from a Sierran stream
Rippled again the olden dream.

The Shepherd Sings of the Forgotten

YOU call her name! My mind runs back
Into a realm of old time dream;
The good south porch and almond trees;
Tall sycamore beside a stream!

You call her name! A slight form moves
Beneath that ancient sycamore;
And light blue eyes and yellow hair
Gleam in the misty Nevermore.

Yea, strew your leaves old sycamore
By murky tule lake and stream
And Bluebells, shroud in perfume-dust
All that is left of the old dream!

For mind cannot forever hold
The sweet dim pictures of the past;
And heart would burst and brain would burn
Could we not turn from them at last!

Another Friend

THE months and years now glided by,
And o'er the hills where oats grow high,
Trailed the sheep and the shepherd old
Brought them at evening to the fold.
Again at morn he wandered forth
And led his charge to the high wild north;
Or back again to the lily south,
Where fil'ree 'rich lined Zora's mouth—
The stream that swift o'er rock and fall
Came through the glades by Carmo Hall—
By Carmo Hall where poppies grew,
And oak trees wore their greenest hue;
And where the grey Castillian Dame,
And child and great grand children claim
Valley and hill and field renowned
For more than twenty miles around.
Rich in cattle and sheep was she,
And golden wheat and honey-bee.
In years she boasted four-score-ten,
And Carmo Hall was gayest when
The mild September birthday feast
Gathered the children from great to least;
And neighbors many a mile around;
With strangers that in the gates were found;
But lighter of heart than all the kin
Was he who played the violin.

The Birthday Serenade

HIGH on the porch the lantern swung
Outside the gate where the rose-tree clung
Echoed and clanged the candolin
And joy and merry song and din
And babbling voices murmured round
While loud and clear was the tabor's sound.
And evermore was hallooed clear
Tumultuous shout and cheer on cheer,
Until all wide the welcome door
Swung and the serenade was o'er.
As once it did in olden time
The Dame's heart beat in Mexic rhyme
For, in the flow of days gone by,
E'en as her children standing nigh
The country porch; with tambourine
A stately youth of eye screne
Stood neath her father's window-sill,
And in the evening, fair and still,
Played till the full-lit harvest-moon
Sank 'neath the yellow-pale sand-dune.
Ah, that is now a golden dream !
She oped the door, and came the stream
Of son and nephew and grandchild;
And motherly she on them smiled.

The Feast at the Rancho

THE feast in Carmo now was set,
And many a lip with wine was wet
That calm September afternoon;
And rich the purple grape and prune,
And roasted hare, and winged brood,
Drenched with amber olive flood,
And peppers sheathed in leafy corn;
The Tuna, sweet from Cactus-thorn:
Hot enchiladas made divine
By one, the deftest of her line;
And nuts the gray-fleeced squirrel hoards
Loaded the polished redwood boards:
And steaming cups with yellow cream,
And cress from winding meadow stream.
This was the feast the Rancho Queen
Served with kindly smile I ween
In the dream-days of long ago
By the swift Zora's reedy flow.

The Dance

AFTER the feast the dance began.
As o'er the strings the minstrel ran,
The dancers moved in fitful whirl
And silks and sashes furl on furl,
Rustled away in dreamy maze,
And dreamily in winding ways
The smooth low-murm'ring music played,
Wav'ring as colors wave and fade;
And lover and maid are carried quite
To untrod regions of delight.
The eye-gleam flashed was quick returned
And hearts with unseen fires burned;
Until the minstrel touched a string
That swept them to the mystic ring
Of that strange wand'ring spirit-strain
Which famed Sir Bedivere heard when
The good King Arthur sailed afar
Into the redd'ning sunset bar.
The dance was stilled, but yet the bard
Conjured the magic of that chord.
The dancers mused and stood at gaze,
Awed with the strange seraphic blaze
Of that wild—shrilling prophet-strain,

Which faded, waved, and broke again
To the mild melody which croons
To lovers under Autumn moons.
Later the light chords rose again,
And all night long to mystic strain
Quivered the floor to rhythmic feet;
But when the dawn on golden street
Scattered her pearls of orient light
Nothing was heard save the swallows' flight,
The music divine was an echo lost
And one more feast, a shattered ghost.
Thus many a year the minstrel played
The grandam's dance and serenade.
And maidens sighed while high the tune
Lilted and ran like an ancient rune;
And at the feast he loftier sung
Of time and happy love among
The dales and hills of long ago
Where Zora and La Tara flow.

The Return to the Hills.

THE doors are shut, the lights are low,
The coals have lost their ruddy glow.
Reclining in her oaken chair,
The Grandam scans the twilight air.
Away, afar along the height
Where walks the minstrel toward the night
Back to the cot among the hills,
She listens to the twinkling bells.
Anon the great horned owl calls,
And now the silent meteor falls,
And far on the mountain, flash on flash,
The weird chain lightning, lash on lash,
Enfolds the purple eastern sky,
And towers and burns all threat'ningly;
Yet silent as the meteor flame,
The blaze of light full silent came;
For where those fires come and go,
Sierra folds her robe of snow.
Meanwhile the minstrel's steady tread
Resounded o'er the streamlet bed,
And on across the gray divide,
To where the dark-green laurels hide,
The frail star-flower and fern of gold;
Down where the oaks and willows hold

In long embrace the cabin home,
Soon in a worn and pond'rous tone
Beside the fire of buck-eye coals
He reads, until the clock-bell tolls
Eleven. Then, with trembling hand,
He takes the magic music-wand,
And plays, with many a swing and sweep,
The hymn that brings the dreamful sleep.

The Last Pilgrimage to the Rancho

THE herder now kept to his home
Nor sheep nor cattle were wont to roam.
All winter long, on northern hills,
The flocks were fed nigh upland rills;
And when at night the winter wind
Shrilled by cabin eaves and whined
Around the flues, safe by the fire
The bard was housed, while ever nigher
The storm-wind roared. In spring the grass
Still blossomed rich in northern pass;
And still the sheep on upland lawns
All summer through fed with the fawns
That sleek in northern shelters born
Heard all unscared the shepherd's horn.
But when the time for birthday feast
Came, and the summer trade winds ceased,
Leaving for weeks in quiet air
The autumn haze; and hilltop there
Wore, like a veil, September mist,
A longing he could not resist
Stole to the vagrant shepherd's heart;
And now he gowned him to depart,
And long ere Phosphor raised his head,
His feet bore down the canyon bed

To Carmo. Paced he slow and wan,
For o'er his head a hot sun shone.
And 'twas high noon before there gleamed
The tavern of whose walls he dreamed.
Loud beat his heart, his forehead burned,
He pictured how, a friend returned,
The Spanish Dame would welcome him.
But far away the vale grew dim,
And vague misgivings thronged his brain.
His heart was smit with sudden pain;
For, winding up the distant grade,
He saw a long procession fade.
The high black hearse with somber plume
Sank o'er the hill, and solemn gloom
Wrapped all the dale. He knew the worst.
Slow passed he down to where he first,
In old adobe, played the birthday song.
About the walls he wandered long,
Heard from the lips of sweet sixteen,
One of black hair and eyes, I ween,
How the sweet rest had glided in
To the dark eye, and all the din
And dust and pain that trailed those years,
Ninety and more, and all the fears
Moved to the misty Nevermore.
Then pond'rous Grief upon him bore,

And prone he lay in evening dew,
Till she of ruddy lips updrew,
And gave him of the honeyed cask.
Revived, he paused no more to ask
The useless question; but straightway,
Kissing a hand as if to say:
"Farewell, O tender flashing eye,"
Moaning a weird heart-aching sigh,
Moved with the faithful violin
Back o'er the path and up again
Unto the point where the dim trail
Looks for the last upon the vale.
Here waiting, gazed on Carmo Hall,
And on the string the bow let fall.
Soft o'er the trees the music rang
But bitter in his heart he sang:
"Now shall the eagle and coyote guard
The broken banquet-hall of that old dream;
And nought of mirth and vintage song be
heard
Save what is hollow-echoed from the stream.
And, where the Spanish Grandam took her rest,
Shall ivy cling and pale laburnum grow;
For she who sang and made the laughing jest
Has shut the door and gone where none shall
know."

Long musing, walked he silent on,
Nursing at heart the wound, and drawn
Up and afar to the great heights
By the weird phantoms and wild lights
That fluttered feverish in his brain,
Till the moon rose and in her train
A star loomed on the mountain crest.
He drew the bow from out his breast;
An old strain brought the mild surcease
Of pain—the pulse of old-time peace.
“I cannot see the shady distant trail
That winds among the gnarled oaks and ferns;
And yet I know that, on beyond the blue,
For me a quenchless love-light burns.
And so I climb and feast among the flowers,
And at the midnight loiter 'neath the pine,
While at the flaming sun-down red I sup
My own Eve-Star's ambrosial wine.
And when at last I mount the far-off crag,
I know that, on the happy wind-blown crest,
The wished-for hand shall flash the long-
sought light,
And in the splendor I shall rest.”
Twilight veered by, yet up the height
Slow climbed the bard, on to the light,
With many a pain and twinge of heart;

On where La Taran ridges part,
Or where Titanic chasms run;
And all the while weird music spun
Its thread divine upon the air.
Wailing at last, it ended there
Where the great peak, its mighty dome
Lifts in a tower of misty gloom:
And purged and white the soul was gone
Away and far unto its own.

* * * * *

And now when sings the sweet south wind
On the fair heights and rain is kind,
The mountaineer rests safe within,
Murm'ring: "The Herder's Violin."



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